

KININS V

Part B

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CONTENTS - PART B

KALLIKREIN AND OTHER PROTEASE INHIBITORS

Human Kallistatin, a New Tissue Kallikrein-Binding Protein: Purification and Characterization	1
Maoyin Wang, Joseph Day, Lee Chao, and Julie Chao	
The Design of Specific Inhibitors of Tissue Kallikrein and Their Effect on the Blood Pressure of the Rat	9
James Burton and Athanassios Benetos	
Semisynthetic Arginine-15-Aprotinin, an Improved Inhibitor for Human Plasma Kallikrein	15
H. Tschesche, J. Beckmann, A. Mehlich, A. Feldmann, H.R. Wenzel, C.F. Scott, and R.W. Colman	
In Vivo Inhibition of Tissue Kallikreins by Kininogen Sequence Analogue Peptides	23
Hideki Okunishi, Jocelyn Spragg, James Burton, and Noboru Toda	
Highly Selective Synthetic Inhibitors with Regard to Plasma-Kallikrein Activities	29
S. Okamoto, U. Okamoto, K. Wanaka, A. Hikikata-Ikunomiya, M. Bohgaki, T. Naito, N. Horie, and Y. Okada	
Aprotinin Concentrations Effective for the Inhibition of Tissue Kallikrein and Plasma Kallikrein in Vitro and in Vivo	35
Hans Hoffmann, Matthias Siebeck, Olaf Thetter, Marianne Jochum, and Hans Fritz	
Changes in the Kallikrein-Kinin-System after Different Dose Regimen of Aprotinin During Cardiopulmonary Bypass Operation	43
W. Heller, G. Fuhrer, M.J. Gallimore, J. Michel, and H.-E. Hoffmeister	
Central Effect of Aprotinin, A Serine Protease Inhibitor, on Blood Pressure in Spontaneously Hypertensive and Wistar-Kyoto Rats	49
Shinji Seto, Masazumi Akahoshi, Shigeru Kusano, Shin-ichi Kitamura, and Kunitake Hashiba	
Augmentation of Kallikrein and Plasmin Inhibition Capacity by Aprotinin Using a New Assay to Monitor Therapy	55
M.J. Gallimore, G. Fuhrer, W. Heller, and H.-E. Hoffmeister	

Studies on the Inhibition of Plasma Kallikrein, Cl-Esterase and β -FXIIa in the Presence and the Absence of Heparins	61
G. Fuhrer, M.J. Gallimore, W. Heller, and H.-E. Hoffmeister	
The Major Plasma Kallikrein Inhibitor in Guinea Pig Plasma with Contrapsin-like Nature	67
Takahisa Imamura and Takeshi Kambara	
Comparative Studies on Fast Acting PA-Inhibitors from Pig and Human Peripheral Leucocytes	73
Marija Kopitar, Marina Drobnič-Kosorok, Vladimir Cotic, Dusica Gabrijelčić, Roman Jerala, and Vito Turk	
In Vivo Function of $\text{C}\bar{\text{I}}$ -Inhibitor and Pathophysiology of Edema Attack in Patients with Hereditary Angioneurotic Edema	79
J. Kodama, K. Uchida, T. Sakata, and F. Funakoshi	

T-KININ AND T-KININOGEN

Effect of Thyroidectomy on Rat Plasma T-Kininogen Concentration as Demonstrated by a New and Direct T-Kininogen Radioimmunoassay	87
Jacob Bouhnik, Françoise Savoie, François Alhenc-Gelas, Thierry Baussant, Francis Gauthier, and Pierre Corvol	
The Peculiar T-Kininase Activity of Rat Mast Cell Chymase	91
F. Gauthier, T. Moreau, N. Gutman, D. Faucher, T. Baussant, F. Alhenc-Gelas	
Kinin Formation From T-Kininogen by Spleen Acid Kininogenases	97
Keiko Yamafuji and Yoshiko Matsuki	
A Novel Kinin, Met-Ile-Ser-Bradykinin(Met-T-Kinin) is Released from T-Kininogen by an Acid Proteinase of Granulomatous Tissues in Rats	103
Wataru Sakamoto, Fumihiko Satoh, Shigeharu Nagasawa, Hiroshi Handa, Shigenori Suzuki, Soichiro Uehara, and Akio Hirayama	
T. Kinin in Human Ovarian Carcinoma Ascites	109
G. Wunderer and I. Walter	

HYPERTENSION AND KALLIKREIN-KININ

Plasma Kinin Levels in Experimental Hypertension in Rats	115
Motoya Nakagawa and Alberto Nasjletti	
Role of Renal Kallikrein in the Regulation of Blood Pressure in the Rat Remnant Kidney Model of Chronic Renal Failure	121
Masayuki Kanazawa, Keishi Abe, Minoru Yasujima, Kazunori Yoshida, Masahiro Kohzuki, Masaya Tanno, Yutaka Kasai, Ken Omata, Makito Sato, Kazuhisa Takeuchi, Masao Hiwatari, and Kaoru Yoshinaga	

The Renal Kallikrein-Kinin System in Renoparenchymal Hypertension	127
Toshiaki Ando, Kazuaki Shimamoto, Nobuyuji Ura, Toyoharu Yokoyama, Shuzaburo Fukuyama, Yasukazu Yamaguchi, Hidehisa Nakagawa, Yoshihiro Mori, Hitoko Ogata, and Osamu Iimura	
Effect of Oral Potassium Load on Urinary Kallikrein Excretion in Essential Hypertension	133
Eiki Murakami, Kunio Hiwada, Tatsuo Kokubu, and Yoichi Imamura	
The Effects of Aging on Urinary Kallikreins and Other Vasoactive Substances in Essential Hypertension	139
S. Fang, K. Abe, K. Omata, M. Yasujima, and K. Yoshinaga	
Renal Kininases in Primary Aldosteronism	145
Nobuyuki Ura, Kazuaki Shimamoto, Hitoko Ogata, Toru Sakakibara, Toshiaki Ando, Shuzaburo Fukuyama, Motoya Nakagawa, Shigeyuki Saito, Shigemichi Tanaka, and Osamu Iimura	
TISSUE KININOGENASES	
Purification and Immunological Properties of Human Urinary Kallikrein and Prokallikrein	151
Akiko Irie, Saori Takahashi, Yoshiaki Katayama, Yukio Shibata, and Yoshihiro Miyake	
Characterization of N-Linked Oligosaccharides of Human Urinary Kallikrein Molecules	157
Masahiko Ikekita, Kazumasa Aoki, Masafumi Kamada, Kazuyuki Kizuki, and Hiroshi Moriya	
Rat Submandibular Gland Kallikreins A and B: Isolation, Purification, and Properties	163
Audrey H.I. Salgado, Glenio R.T. Siqueira, Luis Juliano, and Amintas F.S. Figueiredo	
Human Salivary Kallikrein and Submaxillary Glands Kallikreins	169
Yoshifumi Matsuda, Yukio Fujimoto, Yasuhiro Watanabe, Tadashi Obara, and Sumiyuki Akihama	
Characterization of Human Pancreatic Kallikrein	177
H. Terashima, Y. Atomi, N. Ohnishi, A. Kuroda, Y. Morioka, M. Ikekita, K. Aoki, M. Kamada, K. Kizuki, and H. Moriya	
Immunocytochemical Identification of Glandular Kallikrein In the Rat Anterior Pituitary	183
Carlos P. Vño, Ricardo H. Silva, and C. Andrew Powers	
Localization of Kallikrein in Human Male Genital Organ	189
Yoshiaki Kumamoto, Seiichi Saito, Naoki Ito, Kazuaki Shimamoto, and Osamu Iimura	

Isolation and Partial Characterization of Rabbit Urinary Kallikrein	195
R.C.R. Stella, P.C. Duarte, M.S. Araujo-Viel, M.U. Sampaio, and C.A.M. Sampaio	
Tissue Kallikreins of the Guinea-Pig	201
Grabriele Mayer, Kanti D. Bhoola, and Franz Fielder	
Presence of Immunoreactive Tissue Kallikrein in Human Polymorphonuclear (PMN) Leucocytes	207
C.D. Figueroa, A.G. MacIver, P. Dieppe, J.C. Mackenzie, and K.D. Bhoola	
Enzyme-Linked Immunosorbent Assays for Human Tissue Kallikrein and Analysis of Immunoreactive Kallikrein in the Plasma by Them	211
Kazuyuki Kizuki, Satoru Suzuki, Kazumasa Aoki, Masafumi Kamada, Masahiko Ikekita, Toshimori Inaba, and Hiroshi Moriya	
Glandular Kallikrein-Like Enzyme in Adrenal Glands	217
G. Scicli, H. Nolly, O.A. Carretero, and A.G. Scicli	

PLASMA KALLIKREIN-KININ AND RELATED SYSTEMS

Further Characterization of Monoclonal Antibodies Against Rat Plasma Kallikrein, Rat Low Molecular Weight Kininogen and Synthetic Bradykinin	223
Gurrinder S. Bedi and Nathan Back	
An Enzyme-Linked Immunosorbent Assay (ELISA) for Kinins in Tryptic Digests	231
Kalyan Rao Anumula, Raymond P. Schulz, and Nathan Back	
Hydrolysis of Synthetic Peptides and Natural Substrates by Plasma Kallikrein and its Light Chain	239
Guacyara Motta, Misako U. Sampaio, and Claudio A.M. Sampaio	
Purification of Factor XII from Porcine Plasma and its Activation by Porcine Plasma Kallikrein	243
Kiyoshi Kato, Hiroshi Mashiko, Kyoichi Fujii, Kumiko Shiina, Kenichi Miyamoto, Noriko Kohashi, and Hidenobu Takahashi	
Study on the In Vitro Assay Method for Evaluating the Inhibitory Effect of Various Substances on the Production of Plasma Kallikrein	249
Katsumi Nishikawa, Hitoshi Kawakubo, Kenji Matsumoto, Hisashi Yago, Yoshio Toyomaki, and Seishi Suehiro	
A New Analytical System for the Proteases and Antiproteases Assessment	255
Jean Boulanger, Pierre Ers, M-Violaine Lemaire, Michel Notche, and Albert Adam	

INHIBITORS

cDNA Cloning of Kininase 1	261
Wolfgang Gebhard, Matthias Schube, and Manfred Eulitz	
Cysteine Protease Inhibitors with S-(3-Nitro-2-Pyridinesulphenyl)- Cysteine Residue in Affinity Analogs of Peptide Substrates	265
Rei Matsueda, Hideaki Umeyama, Eiki Kominami, and Nobuhiko Katunuma	
Studies on New Synthetic Inhibitors of Kallikreins and Chymotrypsin	271
T. Yokoyama, N. Yokoo, F. Sato, K. Ikegaya, E. Hattori, K. Watanabe, J. Kirihara, M. Nagakura, and S. Fujii	
Inhibition of Human and Rat Tissue Kallikreins by Peptide Analog Antagonists of Bradykinin	277
Jocelyn Spragg, Raymond J. Vavrek, and John M. Stewart	

KININOGENS, KININS, AND RELATED SUBSTANCES

Changes of T-Kininogen Levels in Plasma and Liver During Development of Rats	283
Izumi Hayashi, Atsushi Kusunoki, Yoshinao Nagashima, Masahiko Hayashi, and Sachiko Oh-ishi	
Leukocyte-Induced Regulation of Hepatic Production of T-Kininogen	287
Norio Itoh, Katsutoshi Yayama, and Hiroshi Okamoto	
Identification of Thiol-Activated T-Kininogenases in the Rat and Mouse Submandibular Glands	293
A. Barlas, X. Gao, and L.M. Greenbaum	
Sex Dimorphism and Estrogen Regulation of Kininogens in Rat Serum, Adrenal Gland, and Kidney	297
Julie Chao, Steven Chao, William Xiong, Limei Chen, Christopher Swain, and Lee Chao	
Monoclonal Antibodies Against the Complex Between HMW Kininogen and Calpain I	305
Iwao Ohkubo, Shigeki Higashiyama, and Makoto Sasaki	
Kinin-Containing Kininogen is Present in Human Seminal Plasma	311
Edwin Fink, Wolf-Bernhard Schill, and Werner Miska	
Studies of the Cleavage of Human High Molecular Weight Kininogen by Purified Plasma and Tissue Kallikreins, and Upon Contact Activation of Plasma	317
Sesha Reddigari and Allen P. Kaplan	
Radioimmunoassay of Kinins and its Application to Purification of Kininogens	325
Toshiyuki Yasui and Takao Saruta	

Measurement of Des-Phe ⁸ -Arg ⁹ -Bradykinin by Enzyme-Immuno- Assay --- A Useful Parameter of Plasma Kinin Release	331
Masataka Majima, Akinori Ueno, Noriyuki Sunahara, and Makoto Katori	
Characterization of an Sh-Proteinase Inhibitor from Bothrops Jararaca Plasma	337
A.M. Chudzinski, M.L.V. Oliva, M.U. Sampaio, and C.A.M. Sampaio	

KININASES

A Sensitive Method for Differential Determination of Kininase I, II, and Neutral Endopeptidase (NEP) in Human Urine	343
Hitoko Ogata, Nobuyuki Ura, Kazuaki Shimamoto, Toru Sakakibara, Toshiaki Ando, Takatoshi Nishimiya, Motoya Nakagawa, Shuzaburo Fukuyama, Atsushi Masuda, Yasukazu Yamaguchi, Takashi Ise, Shigeyuki Saito, Mamoru Shiiki, Kikuya Uno, and Osamu Iimura	
Localization of Neutral Endopeptidase in the Kidney Determined by the Stop-Flow Method	349
Thoru Sakakibara, Nobuyuki Ura, Kazuaki Shimamoto, Hitoko Ogata, Toshiaki Ando, Shuzaburo Fukuyama, Yasukazu Yamaguchi, Atsushi Masuda, Yoshihiro Mori, Shigeyuki Saito, Takashi Ise, Yasumoto Sasa, Kazuaki Yamauchi, and Osamu Iimura	
Metabolism of Bradykinin by Multiple Coexisting Membrane-Bound Peptidases in Lung: Techniques for Investigating the Role of Each Peptidase Using Specific Inhibitors	355
Arthur T. Orawski, Jean P. Susz, and William H. Simmons	
Purification of Angiotensin-Converting Enzyme from Human Intestine	365
Makoto Hayakari, Ken-ichi Amano, Hiroshi Izumi, and Satoshi Murakami	
Involvement of Angiotensin-Converting Enzyme (KININASE II) in Neuropeptide Metabolism	371
Hideyoshi Yokosawa, Yoshitaka Ohgaki, Mitsuo Satoh, Yurika Fujii, Shogo Endo, and Shin-ichi Ishii	
Distribution of Angiotensin I Converting Enzyme in Male Reproductive Systems of Various Vertebrates and Properties of the Genital Enzymes	377
Takamasa Yamaguchi, Masahiko Ikekita, Kazuyuki Kizuki, and Hiroshi Moriya	
A New Type of Ultrasensitive Bioluminescence Enzyme Substrates for Kininases	383
Reinhard Geiger and Werner Miska	

KININ RECEPTORS AND ANTAGONISTS

The Hypotensive Response to Des-Arg ⁹ -Bradykinin Increases During <i>E. Coli</i> Septicemia in the Pig	389
Matthias Siebeck, Eric T. Whalley, Hans Hoffmann, Joachim Weipert, and Hans Fritz	
Development of bradykinin Antagonists: Structure- Activity Relationships for New Categories of Antagonist Sequences	395
Raymond J. Vavrek and John M. Stewart	
Tissue Selectivity of Novel Specific and Competitive Antagonists of Neurokinin B on Isolated Smooth Muscles	401
Shigeru Naminohira, Yoshiki Uchida, Keiko Okimura, Katsuro Kurosawa, Takeshi Sakai, Naoki Sakura, and Tadashi Hashimoto	
Competitive Antagonists of Bradykinin: In Vitro (Jugular Vein) and In Vivo (Blood Pressure Response) Studies	407
Hans Hoffmann, Eric T. Whalley, Matthias Siebeck, Joachim Weipert, and Hans Fritz	
Kinin Receptors in Smooth Muscle and Vascular Effects in Sodium Depleted Rats	411
Minoru Yasujima, Keishi Abe, Kaoru Yoshinaga, P. Geoffrey Matthews, and Colin I. Johnston	
Effect of the Substance(s) Released <i>In Vitro</i> by the Interaction of <i>BOTHROPS JARARACA</i> (BJ) Venom or Trypsin and BJ Plasma on BJ Blood Pressure and Uterus	419
B.C. Prezoto, E. Hiraichi, F.M.F. Abdalla, A.A.C. Lavras, and Z.P. Picarelli	

KALLIKREIN-KININ IN HEALTH AND DISEASES

Long-Term Effects of Aldosterone on Kallikrein and Sodium in Rats	425
Minoru Yasujima, Keishi Abe, Masaya Tanno, Masahiro Kohzuki, Masayuki Kanazawa, Kazunori Yoshida, Ken Omata, Yutaka Kasai, Makito Sato, Kazuhisa Takeuchi, Masao Hiwatari, and Kaoru Yoshinaga	
Activation of Inactive Kallikrein in the Rat Kidney During Low Sodium Intake	431
Masanori Takaoka, Motokazu Ohyama, Masatsugu Nakamura, Mikio Nishii, and Shiro Morimoto	
Urinary Kallikrein Excretion in Neurogenic Hypertension in the Dogs: Possible Relationship Between Kallikrein Excretion and Catecholamines	437
Philippe Valet, Jean-Loup Bascands, Christiane Pécher, Jean-Pierre Moatti, Jean-Louis Montastruc, and Hean-Pierre Girolami	
Glandular Kallikrein, Renin and Angiotensin Converting Enzyme of Diabetic and Hypertensive Rats	443
Hiroshi Handa, Shoki Sakurama, Shoichi Nakagawa, Taro Yasukouchi, Wataru Sakamoto, and Hiroshi Izumi	

Role of Renal Kallikrein in the Increased Fractional Sodium Excretion in the Rat Remnant Kidney Model of Chronic Renal Failure	449
Masayuki Kanazawa, Keishi Abe, Minoru Yasujima, Kazunori Yoshida, Masahiro Kohzuki, Masaya Tanno, Yutaka Kasai, Ken Omata, Makito Sato, Kazuhisa Takeuchi, Masao Hiwatari, and Kaoru Yoshinaga	
Aldosterone, Kallikrein, Kininase I and II in Normal and Hypertension Complicated Pregnancy	455
S. Ferrazzani, P. Leardi, D.L. Magnotti, S. De Carolis, E. Moneta, G. Porcelli, A.R. Volpe, E. Menini, and I. Liberale	
Kinin-Kininase System in Drug Addict Woman in Pregnancy and Puerperium	463
A. Virgolino, G. Noia, M. De Santis, A.R. Volpe, M. Di Iorio, G. Porcelli, and U. Bellati	
Kallikrein-Kinin System in Newborns of the Drug Addicted	471
E. Salvaggio, C. Fundaro, A.M. Falasconi, A. Parigi, P. De Sole, P. Ferrara, A.R. Volpe, and G. Porcelli	
Physiologic Role of the Peripheral Enkephalinergic System in Regulating Cardiovascular Homeostasis: Evidence of Interactions with the Renin-Angiotensin and Kallikrein-Kinin Systems	477
M. Carmignani, G. Porcelli, A.R. Volpe, and P. Preziosi	
Utilization of Kininase Activities as Indicators of Malignant Disease	483
A. Amato, L. De Giovanni, A.R. Volpe, A. Butti, and G. Porcelli	
Role of Endogenous Vasodilator Prostaglandins in the Proliferation of Vascular Smooth Muscle Cells of Spontaneously Hypertensive Rats	485
Toshihiko Ishimitsu, Yoshio Uehara, Masao Ishii, and Tsuneaki Sugimoto	
Angiotensin Converting Enzyme Inhibitors, Captopril and Enalaprilat, Augment Bradykinin-Induced Prostacyclin Synthesis in Cultured Rat Vascular Smooth Muscle Cells	489
Kazuhisa Takeuchi, Keishi Abe, Makito Sato, Minoru Yasujima, Ken Omata, Yutaka Kasai, Masayuki Kanazawa, Fang Shou-nan, and Kaoru Yoshinaga	
Renal Function as Affected by Inhibitors of Kininase II and of Neutral Endopeptidase 24.11 in Rats with and without Desoxycorticosterone Pretreatment	495
Motoya Nakagawa and Alberto Nasjletti	
PGE ₂ Synthesis in Cultured Renal Papillary Collecting Tubule Cells from Young and Aged Spontaneously Hypertensive Rats	501
Makito Sato, Keishi Abe, Kazuhisa Takeuchi, Minoru Yasujima, Masao Hiwatari, Ken Omata, Yutaka Kasai, Kei Kudo, Masayuki Kanazawa, Kazunori Yoshida, Kazuo Tsunoda, and Kaoru Yoshinaga	

Factor XII Levels in Patients after Abdominal Surgery	509
G. Fuhrer, M.J. Gallimore, M. Lambrecht, and W. Heller	
Mechanism of Activation of the Kallikrein-Kinin System in Plasma of Patients with Atopic Allergic Diseases	515
V.L. Dotsenko, N.M. Nenasheva, E.A. Neshkova, N.A. Morozova, and G.A. Yarovaya	
Localization of Glandular Kallikrein in Nasal Mucosa of Allergic and Nonallergic Individuals	523
C.R. Baumgarten, R. Schwarting, and G. Kunkel	
Participation of Substance P in Inflammatory Responses	529
Norifumi Yonehara, Yasuo Imai, Tooru Shibutani, and Reizo Inoki	
Interaction of Endogenous Kinins and Prostaglandins in the Plasma Exudation of Kaolin-Induced Pleurisy in Rats	535
Yozo Hori, Hirokuni Jyoyama, Katsutoshi Yamada, Hiroyasu Kageyama, Atsushi Kurosawa, Katsumi Hirose, and Makoto Katori	
Role of Bradykinin Generating and Degrading Systems in the Vascular Permeability Response Induced with Kaolin in Rats	541
Seiichiro Kumakura, Izumi Kamo, and Susumu Tsurufuji	
Endotoxin Shock, Kinin System, and PAF-acether in the Rat	547
J. Damas, G. Remacle-Volon, A. Adam, and V. Bourdon	
Estimation of Plasma Kallikrein in Sickle-Cell Anemia, and its Relation to the Coagulation and Fibrinolytic Systems	553
Dayse LourenCo, Misako U. Sampaio, Jose Kerbaudy, and Claudio A.M. Sampaio	
Studies on Coagulation-Fibrinolysis and Kallikrein-Kinin Systems and Kininase Activity and Kininase II Quantity in Amniotic Fluid	559
S. Mutoh, Y. Yaoi, A. Teh, M. Saito, N. Aoki, T. Abe, Y. Ohno, and N. Itoh	
Studies on Urinary Coagulation-Fibrinolysis and Kallikrein- Kinin Systems and Kininase in Normal Pregnancy, Labor and Puerpreium	569
S. Mutoh, Y. Yaoi, A. Teh, M. Saito, N. Aoki, T. Abe, Y. Ohno, and N. Itoh	
Elastase Release in Plasma with Increased C1-Inhibition Capacity During Recirculation of Blood	579
W. Heller, G. Fuhrer, A. Philipitsch, and H.-E. Hoffmeister	
Changes in Complement Components After Intravascular Application of Contrast Media	585
H.M. Hoffmeister, G. Fuhrer, H.P. Platten, and W. Heller	
Plasma Kallikrein Clearance by the Liver of Normal and Injured Rats	591
Carlos F. Toledo, Maria Kouyoumdjian, and Durval Rosa Borges	

Studies on the Mechanism of the Sedational State; "Tranquilization" Evoked by Bradykinin or Kallikrein in Rats	595
K. Yazaki	
Does Kallikrein Improve the Brain Function in Dementia?	601
Yoshikazu Ishizuka, Hitoshi Fukuzawa, Takashi Asada, and Tetuhiko Kariya	
Circulatory Effect of Kallikrein; with Special Reference to Cerebral Circulation	607
Manabu Miyazaki	
Serial Measurement of Bradykinin and Fibrinopeptide A of Cerebrospinal Fluid and Plasma in Patients with Subarachnoid Hemorrhage	611
Hidetoshi Kasuya, Takashi Shimizu, Takaharu Okada, Kenji Takahashi, Taeko Summerville, and Koichi Kitamura	
Effects of the Kallikrein-Kinin System on Phasic Coronary Vasospasm in Dogs	617
H. Ohde, K. Morimoto, T. Kitao, K. Terada, H. Kohara, H. Tai, M. Fujimoto, T. Ogihara, and Y. Kumahara	
The Role of Bradykinin on the Effect of Plasma Kallikrein on Platelet Aggregation	623
Nair Y. Maeda, Celia M.F. Cassaro, M.U. Sampaio, Dalton A.F. Chamone, and C.A.M. Sampaio	
Activation of Calcium Ion-Dependent Proteinases by Bradykinin in Dental Pulp of the Rat	627
Teruo Kudo, Er-Qin Wei, and Reizo Inoki	
Enhancement of Proteinase Activities by Bradykinin in Adrenal Medulla of the Rat	633
Er-Qin Wei, Teruo Kudo, and Reizo Inoki	
Trypsine-Like Esteroproteases, Kinin, and Kininases in Submandibular Gland, Colon, and Pulmonary Lavage Fluid of Mouse Model for Human Cystic Fibrosis (CF)	639
O.L. Catanzaro, O.H. Pivetta, G.N. Dodera Martinez, and S.B. Vila	
Role of the Kallikrein-Kinin System in Human Pancreatitis	643
Soichiro Uehara, Kyosuke Honjyo, Satoshi Furukawa, Akio Hirayama, and Wataru Sakamoto	
Studies of Sweat Kallikrein in Normal Human Subjects	649
Ronald K. Mayfield, Donald A. Sens, Ayad A. Jaffa, and Harry S. Margolius	
Significance of Tissue Kallikrein in Chronic Atrophic Gastritis	657
T. Sakai, S. Otsuka, K. Kizuki, and H. Moriya	
Studies on the Intestinal Absorption of Tissue Kallikrein	663
Edwin Fink, Xu-Chang Feng, and Elmar Richter	

The Effects of Diabetes and Insulin on Colonic
Tissue Kallikrein 669
Ayad A. Jaffa, Donald H. Miller, Harry S. Margolius, and
Ronald K. Mayfield

The Effects of Human Kallikrein and Aprotinin on
Nonmalignant and Malignant Cell Growth 675
M. Korbelik, J. Skrk, M. Poljak-Blazi, A. Suhar, and
M. Boranic

Index 681

CONTENTS - PART A

Tissue Kallikreins and Kinins: Roles in Human Disease and Target for New Drug Development	1
Harry S. Margolius	
Control of Kininogen Gene Expression	7
S. Nakanishi, N. Kitamura, H. Ohkubo, A. Kakizuka, R. Kageyama, Y. Masu, and K. Nakayama	
ANGIOTENSIN I CONVERTING ENZYME INHIBITORS, KININ AND PROSTAGLANDIN SYSTEMS	
Biochemistry of Renin	19
Tatsuo Kokubu, Kunio Hiwada, Eiki Murakami, and Shinjiro Muneta	
Angiotensin I Converting Enzyme	25
Randal A. Skidgel and Ervin G. Erdös	
Pharmacokinetics of Angiotensin Converting Enzyme Inhibitors in Plasma and Tissue Using Radioinhibitor Binding and Displacement Assays	29
C.I. Johnston, B. Jackson, R. Cubela, D. Sivell, and M. Kozhuki	
Role of the Endogenous Angiotensin II in the Antihypertensive Effect of MK 421 in Rats Made Hypertensive by Norepinephrine or Vasopressin	35
Minoru Yasujima, Keishi Abe, Masaya Tanno, and Kaoru Yoshinaga	
Significance of Kallikrein-Kinin and Renin-Angiotensin Systems in the Hypotensive Mechanism of Angiotensin-I Converting Enzyme Inhibitors in Essential Hypertensives	39
Osamu Iimura and Kazuaki Shimamoto	
Clinical Usefulness of Low-Dose Captopril on Mild to Moderate Essential Hypertension	49
Keishi Abe	
Therapeutic Regime of Enalapril Maleate in Japan	55
Takao Saruta	
Beneficial and Adverse Effects of Angiotensin Converting Enzyme Inhibitors	63
Kikuo Arakawa	

TISSUE KALLIKREIN AND ITS FUNCTIONAL ROLES
- KIDNEY AND OTHER ORGANS -

Structural Analysis of a Rat Renal Kallikrein Gene	73
Lee Chao, Ying-Peng Chen, Cheryl Woodley-Miller, Lingyuan Li, Kay von Harten, and Julie Chao	
Development of Competitive Antagonists of Bradykinin	81
John M. Stewart and Raymond J. Vavrek	
Physiological Role of Renal Kallikrein-Kinin System in Human	87
Kazuaki Shimamoto and Osamu Iimura	
Effects of Kinin on Electrolytes Transport and Regulation of Kininase Activity in Distal Nephron Segments of the Rat	97
Kimio Tomita, Kazutomo Ujiie, Yoshitaka Maeda, Yasuhiko Iino, Naoki Yoshiyama, and Tatsuo Shiigai	
Diversity of Kinin Effects on Transporting Epithelia	105
A.W. Cuthbert and L.J. MacVinish	

PATHO-PHYSIOLOGY OF KALLIKREIN-KININ SYSTEM
- INFLAMMATION, ALLERGY AND OTHERS -

The Role of T-Kininogen and H and L Kininogens in Health and Disease	113
L.M. Greenbaum, C. Cho, and A. Barlas	
Recent Studies on the Role of Kinins in Inflammatory Diseases of Human Airways	117
David Proud, J. Owen Hendley, Jack M. Gwaltney, and Robert M. Naclerio	
The Kallikrein-Kinin System in Inflammation	125
Allen P. Kaplan, Michael Silverberg, Berhane Ghebrehiwet, Paul Atkins, and Burton Zweiman	
A Significant Role of Plasma Kallikrein-Kinin System in Plasma Exudation of Rat Carrageenin-Induced Pleurisy	137
Makoto Katori, Masataka Majima, Yoshiteru Harada, and Akinori Ueno	
Role of High Molecular Weight (HMW)-Kininogen in Inflammatory Exudation: Evidence with the Studies of the HMW-Kininogen Deficient Rat	145
Sachiko Oh-ishi, Izumi Hayashi, Kohji Yamaki, Iku Utsunomiya, Masahiko Hayashi, Akiko Yamasu, and Takeshi Nakano	
Kallikrein-Kinin System in Infectious Diseases	153
R.W. Colman	
Kininogen in Tumor-Bearing Mice	159
Hiroshi Okamoto, Norio Itoh, Masahiro Uwani, Satomi Yokota, and Akiko Hatta	

ANGIOTENSIN CONVERTING ENZYME AND INHIBITORS

Regional Distribution of Angiotensin Converting Enzyme in the Rat Kidney	169
Fumihiko Ikemoto, Gyeong-Bu Song, Munechika Tominaga, Yoshiharu Kanayama, and Kenjiro Yamamoto	
Immunohistologic Characterization of Angiotensin Converting Enzyme in the Human Kidney Using Monoclonal and Polyclonal Antibodies	175
Yasuharu Takada, Yutaka Kitami, Yoshikazu Inoue, Kunio Hiwada, and Tatsuo Kokubu	
Effects of Mineralocorticoid on Kininase Activity Along the Distal Nephron Segments of the Rat	181
Kimio Tomita, Kazutomo Ujiie, Yoshitaka Maeda, Yasuhiko Iino, Naoki Yoshiyama, and Tatsuo Shiigai	
Selective Expression of Des-Arg ⁹ -BK Sensitive (B ₁) Receptors In Vivo and In Vitro by Angiotensin Converting Enzyme Inhibitors	185
E.T. Whalley and I.A.A. Nwator	
Demonstration of In Vivo Effects of Ace Inhibitors by the Use of Autoregressive Modelling	191
Takao Wada and Takaaki Aoyagi	
Contribution of Kinin System to the Antihypertensive Action of Angiotensin Converting Enzyme Inhibitors	197
J.N. Sharma	
Increased Insulin-Responsiveness by Ace-Inhibition in Non-Insulin Dependent Diabetes Mellitus	207
K. Rett, K.W. Jauch, M. Wicklmayr, E. Fink, G.J. Dietze, and H. Mehnert	
KININS, RELATED PEPTIDES AND ARACHIDONIC ACID METABOLITES	
A New Structural Class of Biologically Active Peptide in Non-Mammals	215
T. Nakajima, T. Yasuhara, R. Horikawa, J.J. Pisano, and V. Erspamer	
Vasoactive Peptides from the VESPA Orientalis Hornet Venom	221
V.M. L'vov, A.A. Kolmakova, and A.A. Akhunov	
Bradykinin Analogs Induce Histamine Release from Human Skin Mast Cells	225
I.D. Lawrence, J.A. Warner, V.L. Cohan, L.M. Lichtenstein, A. Kagey-Sobotka, R.J. Vavrek, J.M. Stewart, and D. Proud	
Role of Cardiovascular Phospholipase A ₂ and C in the Development of DOCA-Salt Hypertensive Rats	231
Yoshio Uehara, Atsushi Numabe, Toshihiko Ishimitsu, Masao Ishii, and Shigeru Yagi	

Neutrophil Producing Capacity of 5-Lipoxygenase Metabolites of Arachidonic Acid After Major Surgery	237
Junichi Utoh, Tetsuro Yamamoto, Takayoshi Utsunomiya, Takeshi Kambara, Hiraaki Goto, and Yoshimasa Miyauchi	
The Mechanism of the Stimulatory Effect of Kallikrein on Prostacyclin Production in Vascular Endothelial Cells	243
Sei-itsu Murota, Ikuo Morita, and Toshie Kanayasu	
The Effect of Bradykinin and its Fragments on the Arachidonate Cascade of Brain Microvessels	249
A. Gecse, Zs. Mezei, and G. Telegdy	
Mechanism of Bradykinin-Induced Nociceptive Response	255
Makoto Katori, Shin-Jei Yong, Masataka Majima, and Akinori Ueno	
Antagonism of the Algesic Action of Bradykinin on the Human Blister Base	261
E.T. Whalley, S. Clegg, J.M. Stewart, and R.J. Vavrek	

KALLIKREIN-KININ IN RENAL FUNCTION

Effects of Sodium Intake on Urinary Excretion and Renal Content of Bradykinin and its Metabolites in Rats	269
Jean Barabé, Abderrahman Bernoussi, and Denise Huberdeau	
Kallikrein Release by Rat Kidney Slices: Effect of Norepinephrine	275
Jean-Loup Bascands, Christiane Pécher, Ghislaine Cabos, and Jean-Pierre Girolami	
Relationship Between ANP, Cyclic GMP and Tissue Kallikrein Following Saline Infusion in Healthy Volunteers	281
Helen Lewis, M. Wilkins, Brenda Selwyn, Ursula Yelland, Megan Griffith, and K.D. Bhoola	
Bradykinin (BK) Enhances Diuresis and Natriuresis in Saline Volume-Expanded Dogs	287
Katsunori Honda, Asao Nunokawa, and Masahito Nagasaka	

KININASES

Kininase Activities in the Human Pituitary Gland	293
Hans Malus, Bernd R. Binder, and Manfred Maier	
Purification of Human Seminal Plasma Kininase II Using Affinity Chromatography	299
Werner Miska, Heinz Croseck, and Wolf-Bernhard Schill	
Dipeptidyl(Amino)Peptidase IV and Post Proline Cleaving Enzyme in Cultured Endothelial and Smooth Muscle Cells	305
Frank E. Palmieri and Patrick E. Ward	
Isolation and Study of the Properties of Kininase from the Venom of Spider Latrodectus Tredecimguttatus	313
Ali Akhunov and Zamira Golubenko	

Post Synthetic Modification of CK-MM by Kininase I	319
Marc van Sande, Dirk Hendriks, Joseph Soons, Simon Scharpé, Ron Wevers, and Barton Holmquist	
Structure of Human Carboxypeptidase in (Kininase I)	325
Randal A. Skidgel, Deepthi K. Weerasinghe, and Ervin G. Erdös	
The Mechanism of Degradation of Bradykinin (LYSYL-Bradykinin) in Human Serum	331
Iftikhar A. Sheikh and Allen P. Kaplan	

KININOGENS

Rocket Immunoassay of High and Low Molecular Weight Kininogens in Human Plasma	337
Nils-Ove Hoem, Harald T. Johansen, Siri Johannesen, and Kjell Briseid	
High Molecular Weight Kininogen Binds to Neutrophils	345
Ellen J. Gustafson, Alvin H. Schmaier, and Robert W. Colman	
Inhibition of Thrombin-Induced Platelet Aggregation by High Molecular Weight Kininogen	349
Robert W. Colman, Rajinder N. Puri, Ellen J. Gustafson, Fengxin Zhou, and Harlan Bradford	
Characterization of Kinins Released from Human Kininogens by Human Urinary Kallikrein	353
Manfred Maier, Guenter Reissert, Ingrid Jerabek, and Bernd R. Binder	
Ornitho-kininogen and Ornitho-kinin: Isolation, Characterization, and Chemical Structure	359
Michio Kimura, Tatsuya Sueyoshi, Takashi Morita, Kosaku Tanaka, and Sadaaki Iwanaga	

INFLAMMATION AND KALLIKREIN-KININ

The Kallikrein-Kininogen System in Myocardial Infarction	369
A. Adam, J. Damas, and H. Kulbertus	
The Pathophysiological Role of Kinin and Chemical Mediators on Experimental Allergic Rhinitis	375
Hideaki Shirasaki, Tadashi Kojima, Kohji Asakura, Akikatsu Kataura, Kazuaki Shimamoto, and Osamu Iimura	
Release of Kinin and Other Chemical Mediators After Antigenic Stimulation in Allergic Rhinitis Patients	379
Tadashi Kojima, Hideaki Shirasaki, Kohji Asakura, Akikatsu Kataura, Kazuaki Shimamoto, and Osamu Iimura	
Kallikrein Activity in Saliva of Patients with Inflammatory and Hyperplastic Diseases of the Oral Mucous Membrane	385
W.H. Arnold, P. Bartholmes, H. Senkel, J.L.N. Roodenburg, and R. Röder	

The Effect of Cyclosporine on Urinary Kallikrein Excretion in Patients with Rheumatoid Arthritis	389
J. Spragg, J.S. Coblyn, P.A. Fraser, K.F. Austen, and M.E. Weinblatt	
The Influence of Oxindanac on Kallikrein Metabolism	393
W. Gross, U. Sinterhauf, S. Gross, and H. Kluger	

KININ RECEPTORS AND ANTAGONISTS

Basic Pharmacology of Kinins: Pharmacologic Receptors and Other Mechanisms	399
Domenico Regoli, Nour-Eddine Rhaleb, Guy Drapeau, Stéphane Dion, Christine Tousignant, Pedro D'Orleans-Juste, and Philippe Devillier	
An Iodinatable Photoaffinity Probe Based on the Structure of Kallidin	409
Michael Webb, Christopher R. Snell, Elsa Phillips, Penny H. Snell, and Johannes G. de Vries	
Specific Binding Sites for Bradykinin and its Degradation Process in Cultured Rat Vascular Smooth Muscle Cells	415
Yukio Hirata, Shoichiro Takata, and Shigeko Takaichi	
Kinin Receptors on Epithelial Cells and Smooth Muscle of the Trachea	421
K.D. Bhoola, J. Bewley, D.M. Crothers, M.I. Cingi, and C.D. Figueroa	
Different Involvement of Endothelium-Derived Relaxing Factor and Prostacyclin in Vasodilator Response to Bradykinin in Isolated Dog Blood Vessels	429
Tomio Okamura and Noboru Toda	
The Effect of a Bradykinin Antagonist on Vasodilatation in the Cat and Rabbit	435
S. Barton, E. Karpinski, and M. Schachter	
Effects on Blood Pressure of Intracerebroventricular Administration of a Kinin Antagonist	439
X.P. Yang, O.A. Carretero, M. Akahoshi, and A.G. Scicli	

PLASMA KALLIKREIN-KININ AND RELATED SYSTEMS

Hageman Factor Dependent Kinin Generation System in Guinea Pig Skin: Extravascular Localization of the Components, and Prolonged Vascular Reaction in Inhibitor-Depleted Animal of This System	447
Tetsuro Yamamoto, Takashi Ishimatsu, and Takeshi Kambara	
Hageman Factor Activation by Polysaccharides: Effect of Molecular Weight	453
Michael Silverberg	
Some Cardiovascular and Hematological Changes Induced in the Rat by Activation of Hageman Factor with Ellagic Acid	461
J. Damas, G. Remacle-Volon, and A. Adam	

Isolation and Characterization of Plant Inhibitors Directed Against Plasma Kallikrein and Factor XII	467
Maria Luiza V. Oliva, Misako U. Sampaio, and Claudio A.M. Sampaio	
A Monoclonal Antibody Recognizing an Icosapeptide Sequence in the Heavy Chain of Human Factor XII Inhibits Surface-Catalyzed Activation	473
Robin A. Pixley and Robert W. Colman	
Effects of INtravascular Ionic and Non-Ionic Radiographic Contrast Agents on Parameters of the Kallikrein- Kinin-System	477
H.M. Hoffmeister, G. Fuhrer, G.A. Abels, and W. Heller	
Changes in Components of the KK-System After Recirculation and the Addition of Plasma Kallikrein	481
G. Fuhrer, M.J. Gallimore, W. Heller, and H.-E. Hoffmeister	
Degradation of Hageman Factor by Chymotrypsin-Like Protease Released from Rat Mast Cells During Degranulation	487
M. Majima, Y. Tani, and M. Katori	
Kinin Release from Human LMW-Kininogen by the Cooperative Action of Human Plasma Kallikrein and Leukocyte Elastase	493
Fumihiko Sato and Shigeharu Nagasawa	
Binding of a Monoclonal Anti-Human Plasma Prekalliprein Antibody to the Complexes of Kallikrein with C1-Inhibitor and α_2 - Macroglobulin Analyzed by Immunoblot and "Sandwich" Assays . . .	499
D. Veloso, S.Y. Tseng, A.R. Craig, and R.W. Colman	

TISSUE KALLIKREINS

Human Urinary Kallikreins A, B, and D: Isolation, Purification, and Properties	507
Raquel S. Lima, Glênio R.T. Siqueira, Luis Juliano, and Amintas F.S. Figueiredo	
Human Urinary Prokallikrein - Structural Analysis on Activation Mechanism	513
Saori Takahashi, Akiko Irie, Yoshiaki Katayama, and Yoshihiro Miyake	
Human Urinary Kallikrein: Amino Acid Sequence and Carbohydrate Attachment Sites	519
Josef Kellermann, Friedrich Lottspeich, Reinhard Geiger, and Rainer Deutzmann	
Structural Analysis of ASN-Linked Oligosaccharides of Porcine Pancreatic Kallikrein	527
Noboru Tomiya, Tadashi Yamaguchi, Juichi Awaya, Masayasu Kurono, Satoshi Endo, Yoji Arata, Hideko Ishihara, Masami Mori, Setsuzo Tejima, and Noriko Takahashi	
Fast Atom Bombardment Mass Spectrometry (FAB-MS): Analysis of Complex Carbohydrate Chains of Tissue Kallikreins	533
Charles C. Sweeley, Rawle Hollingsworth, Douglas Gage, Masahiko Ikekita, and Hiroshi Moriya	

Isolation of [Hydroxyproline ³]Lysyl-Bradykinin Formed by Kallikrein From Human Plasma Protein	539
Manabu Sasaguri, Masaharu Ikeda, Munehito Ideishi, and Kikuo Arakawa	
Tissue Kallikrein Effectively Activates Latent Matrix Degrading Metalloenzymes	545
H. Tschesche, J. Michaelis, U. Kohnert, J. Fedrowitz, and R. Oberhoff	
A Micro-Kininogenase Assay for Studies of Kallikrein in Renal Micropuncture/Micropfusion	549
Narendra B. Oza, Catherine M. Murphy, James S. Kaufman, Debbie Beasley, and Norman G. Levinsky	
Exercise-Induced Increase in Glandular Kallikrein Activity In Human Plasma and Its Significance in Peripheral Glucose Metabolism	555
H. Koh, K. Uchida, M. Waki, and S. Nambu	
Kallikrein-Induced Rat Uterus Contraction is Dependent On Kinin Release	563
Amintas F.S. Figueiredo, Audrey H.I. Salgado, Glênio R.T. Siqueira, and Wilson T. Beraldo	
Relationship Between Human Seminal Kallikrein-Kinin System and Spermatogenesis	567
Yoshiaki Kumamoto, Seiichi Saito, Naoki Ito, Kazuaki Shimamoto, and Osamu Iimura	
Tonin and Kallikrein-Kinin System	573
M.H. Feitosa, J.L. Pesquero, M.A.D. Ferreira, G.M.L. Oliveira, E. Rogana, and W.T. Beraldo	
KALLIKREIN-KININ IN HEALTH AND DISEASES	
Bradykinin Infusion in Long Term Postoperative Parenteral Nutrition Improves Nitrogen Balance and Protein Synthesis	581
Karl-Walter Jauch, Bernaulf Günther, Matthias Wicklmayr, Günther J. Dietze, and Lorenz Schröfel	
Quantification, Isolation, and Structural Determination of Bradykinin and Hydroxyprolyl-Bradykinin in Tumor Ascites	587
Yasuhiro Matsumura, Masami Kimura, Hisao Kato, Tetsuro Yamamoto, and Hiroshi Maeda	
Studies on Kallikrein-Kinin System and Enzymes Activity in Organs and Urine from Diabetic Mice Models	593
O.L. Catanzaro, O.H. Pivetta, A. Zuccollo, N.D. Buzzalino, D.G. de Matos, S.B. Vila, and M. Perez	
Serum Kininases I and II in Patients with Extrinsic and Intrinsic Asthma	599
Hans Schweisfurth	
Dose-Dependent Effects of Bradykinin Infusion in Post- Operative Patients	603
Karl-Walter Jauch, B. Günther, K. Rett, W. Hartl, M. Wicklmyr, G. Dietze, E. Fink, M. Georgieff, and D. Neumeier	

Evidence for Multiple Functions of T-Lymphocytes Associated Serine Proteinases	609
Markus M. Simon, Uli Fruth, Hans-Georg Simon, Steffen Gay, and Michael D. Kramer	
Components of the Plasma Defense Systems in Intensive Care Patients With and Without ARDS	615
W. Heller, G. Fuhrer, and W. Junginger	
Interrelationship Between Urinary Kallikrein and Arginine-Vasopressin in Man	621
K. Yamada, K. Hasunuma, T. Shiina, K. Ito, S. Yoshida, T. Tamura, and S. Yoshida	
NATRIURESIS AND KALLIKREIN-KININ	
Attenuation of Atrial Natriuretic Peptide by Kallikrein in Taurine Administered Rats	629
Masatsugu Horiuchi, Noriyuki Kohashi, Hisashi Nishiyama, Toshihiko Takenaka, Hirokazu Kondo, Makoto Tamura, and Ryo Katori	
Mechanism of Taurine Natriuresis in Rats	635
Noriyuki Kohashi, Takanao Okabayashi, Masatsugu Horiuchi, Hisashi Nishiyama, Toshihiko Takenaka, and Ryo Katori	
Interaction of Atrial Natriuretic Peptide and Amiloride on the Renal Kallikrein-Kinin System	641
Masahide Seino, Keishi Abe, Noboru Nushiro, Yutaka Kasai, Ken Omata, and Kaoru Yoshinaga	
Opposite Effects on Kallikrein Excretion of Natriuretic Doses of Angiotensin Infused into the Dog and the Rat: Reversal of the Effect in the Rat by Atrial Natriuretic Peptide	647
Ivor H. Mills, Pamela A. Newport, F. Spinelli, and Y. Wakabayashi	
Index	653

APROTININ CONCENTRATIONS EFFECTIVE FOR THE INHIBITION OF
TISSUE KALLIKREIN AND PLASMA KALLIKREIN IN VITRO AND IN VIVO

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INTRODUCTION

The basic proteinase inhibitor aprotinin (Trasylol^R) from bovine organs has been used for the treatment of acute pancreatitis, hyperfibrinolysis, and traumatic shock for more than 30 years. However, uncertainty has existed as to the appropriate dosage of aprotinin until recently, when more precise assays to monitor plasma aprotinin levels were developed (Jochum et al., 1984; Mueller-Esterl et al., 1984). These assays have been utilized to monitor aprotinin plasma concentrations in several clinical trials (Jochum et al., 1987; Clasen et al., 1987).

Plasma concentrations of aprotinin sufficient to inhibit the different target enzymes were calculated from enzyme kinetics and substrate availability (Philipp, 1978; Fritz, 1978, 1985). To experimentally assess these theoretical considerations we studied the plasma concentrations of aprotinin preventing the proteinase action of plasma kallikrein and tissue kallikrein on their natural target substrates, the high molecular weight (HMW) and low molecular weight (LMW) kininogen as follows: (i) in in vitro systems the purified components were applied (tissue kallikrein or plasma kallikrein and LMW or HMW kininogen); (ii) in experimental animal models either the purified proteinase (tissue kallikrein) was administered by infusion or the proteinase (plasma kallikrein) was liberated from its precursor by the induction of contact phase activation.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Reagents: Aprotinin (Trasylol^R) was purchased as a sterile isotonic solution for intravenous administration (vials of 500,000 KIU/50 ml, pH 5, specific activity 7150 ± 200 KIU/mg from Bayer AG, Leverkusen, FRG). Human high molecular weight kininogen (HMWK), low molecular weight kininogen (LMWK) and plasma kallikrein (HPK) were isolated from freshly drawn plasma from healthy donors by the method of Mueller-Esterl et al., 1983. Tissue kallikrein from porcine pancreas (PZ 744997) was kindly donated by Bayer AG, Leverkusen, FRG. Dextran sulphate (DS) (M_r 500,000) was obtained from Pharmacia Fine Chemicals, Uppsala, Sweden.

Units and assays. The kallikrein inactivator unit (KIU) is used to measure the activity of aprotinin. One KIU is defined as the amount of aprotinin which decreases the activity of 2 biological kallikrein units by 50 %. Multiplication of the KIU values by a factor of 0.14 transforms these figures into the corresponding microgram quantities of aprotinin. Aprotinin levels in plasma were measured by a competitive enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA) for aprotinin (Mueller-Esterl et al., 1984). Plasma prokallikrein (PPK) levels were measured by a chromogenic substrate assay (S-2302, Kabi Vitrum). Kininogen (HMWK + LMWK) plasma levels were measured by a bradykinin radioimmunoassay after cleavage with trypsin (Uchida and Katori, 1979). Coagulation times were determined by routine methods using diagnostic kits obtained from Behring, FRG. Data are presented as mean \pm SEM.

In vitro studies. All in vitro experiments using purified components were performed in phosphate buffered saline with 1 % bovine serum albumin (pH 7.2, 37°C). By incubating increasing amounts of the inhibitor with a constant amount of the proteinase and kininogen the inhibition stoichiometry of human plasma kallikrein and porcine tissue kallikrein with aprotinin was determined. After a 180 min incubation time the reaction was stopped by acidification and the kinin released was measured by kinin RIA. The concentrations of HMWK (0.8×10^{-6} mol/l) and LMWK (1.8×10^{-6} mol/l) used in vitro were similar to the corresponding physiological plasma levels.

Animal experiments. Weaned piglets weighing 17-23 kg were used. The animals were purchased from the Versuchsgut Oberschleissheim, Veterinary School, University of Munich, FRG. Acepromazine maleate 50 mg (Vetranquil^R) was administered intramuscularly for premedication. Anesthesia was induced with 15 mg/kg pentobarbital (Narcoren^R) and maintained with repeated injections of 4 mg/kg. One arterial and two venous catheters were inserted via the left femoral vessels for hemodynamic monitoring and blood sampling. After a 1-h baseline period the animals were randomly assigned to different experimental protocols (Table 1). Mean arterial blood pressure (MAP) was monitored with a Bentley Trantec Model 800 transducer and a Sirecust 404 monitor (Siemens AG, Munich, FRG). Blood samples were taken before and at 15 min intervals during the experiment. Platelets were counted manually in EDTA anticoagulated samples (Neubauer chamber). Blood samples were anticoagulated with 3.8 % citrate (1:10) for PPK, aprotinin, Quick, or aPTT determinations, or heparin (5 U/ml) for kininogen measurements, and centrifuged at 20°C with 3000 rpm for 20 min. The supernatant was aliquoted and stored at -80°C until measurement. After the observation period of 2 hours (DS groups, Table 1) and 5 hours (TK groups, Table 1), the animals were sacrificed.

Table 1. Experimental protocols: Animals were given either tissue kallikrein (TK) or dextran sulphate (DS) simultaneously with either saline or different doses of aprotinin.

Contact activation [DS 2 mg/kg]	+ saline	(n= 5)	group DS ₀
	+ aprotinin 50,000 KIU/kg	(n= 4)	group DS ₁
	+ aprotinin 200,000 KIU/kg	(n= 4)	group DS ₂
	+ aprotinin 400,000 KIU/kg	(n= 2)	group DS ₃
Tissue Kallikrein [TK 50 µg/(kg x h)]	+ saline	(n= 7)	group TK ₀
	+ aprotinin 694 KIU/(kg x h)	(n= 6)	group TK ₁
	+ aprotinin 1389 KIU/(kg x h)	(n= 6)	group TK ₂

In animals assigned to DS groups (see Table 1) activation of the coagulation, fibrinolytic and plasma kallikrein systems was induced by continuous intravenous infusion of dextran sulphate (DS), 2 mg/kg over 60 min. In addition, five animals (group DS₀) were given saline; ten animals received aprotinin in a total dose ranging between 51,000 and 415,000 KIU/kg (groups DS₁₋₃) intravenously in two equivalent doses, one as a bolus injection before starting the DS infusion and the other dose was coadministered with DS over a 60 min period.

Tissue kallikrein (TK) was infused in 19 animals (see Table 1) at a constant rate of 50 µg/(kg x h) over 3 hours (groups TK₀₋₂). The control animals (group TK₀) received TK and saline. In the remaining animals TK was given simultaneously with a 4 hr infusion of aprotinin. The infusion of aprotinin was started 1 h before TK administration.

RESULTS

Inhibition of tissue kallikrein

Incubation of porcine tissue kallikrein with human LMW and HMW kininogen in vitro resulted in kinin release at tissue kallikrein concentrations greater than 10^{-10} mol/l. The kinin release from LMWK was effectively blocked by aprotinin levels greater than 10^{-7} mol/l (4 KIU/ml) (Fig. 1). This was also demonstrated for HMW kininogen (data not shown).

After tissue kallikrein infusion, mean arterial pressure (MAP) decreased over a 30 min period from 86.5 ± 10.3 mmHg to 76 ± 12.5 mmHg in group TK₀. After 1 h MAP was restored to baseline level. A similar transient decrease in MAP (from 100.3 ± 13.2 to 83.7 ± 24.7 mmHg) was observed in group TK₁, whereas in group TK₂ MAP decreased only slightly (from 92.6 ± 16.2 mmHg to 86.2 ± 5.1 mmHg).

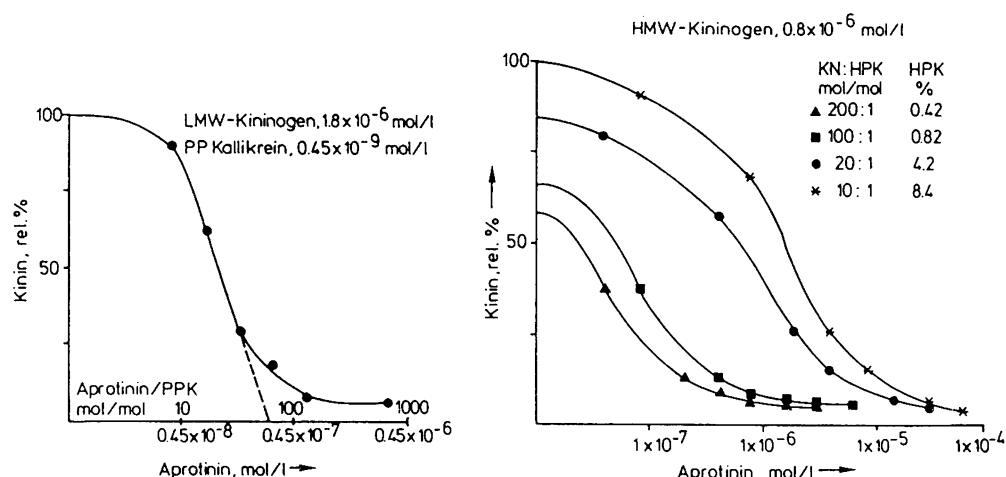


Fig. 1. Dose-response curves of aprotinin on the inhibition of kinin release from (left) human low molecular weight (LMW) kininogen by porcine pancreatic (=tissue) kallikrein (PPK) and (right) human high molecular weight (HMW) kininogen by human plasma kallikrein (HPK) in the in vitro system. The percent values given correspond to the degree of plasma prokallikrein activation in relation to the mean total amount of prokallikrein present in human plasma.

Kininogen concentrations in plasma decreased to $42 \pm 17.5 \%$ of the starting value (100 %) in group TK₀. Aprotinin administration at doses of 694 KIU/(kg x h) in group TK₁, and 1389 KIU/(kg x h) in group TK₂ limited this fall to $63 \pm 6.5 \%$, and $85 \pm 7.6 \%$, respectively (Fig. 2). In these experiments the plasma levels of aprotinin ranged from 0.6 to 1.4 KIU/ml in group TK₁, and from 4 to 7 KIU/ml in group TK₂.

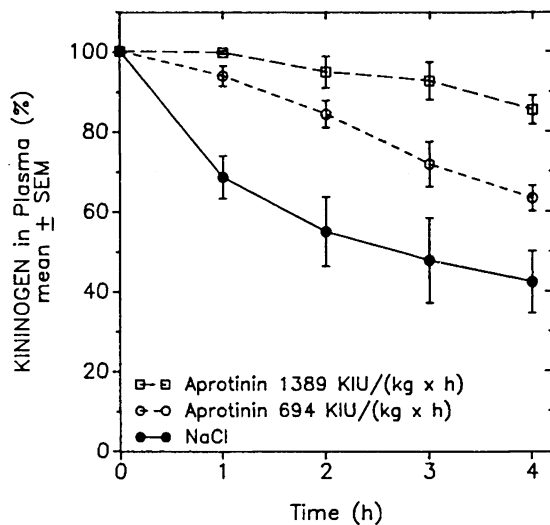


Fig. 2. Plasma kininogen concentrations in animals during an infusion of tissue kallikrein [50 μ g/(kg x h)]. Aprotinin plasma levels ranged from 0.6 to 1.4 KIU/ml and from 4 to 7 KIU/ml during a continuous infusion of 694 KIU/(kg x h) and 1389 KIU/(kg x h), respectively.

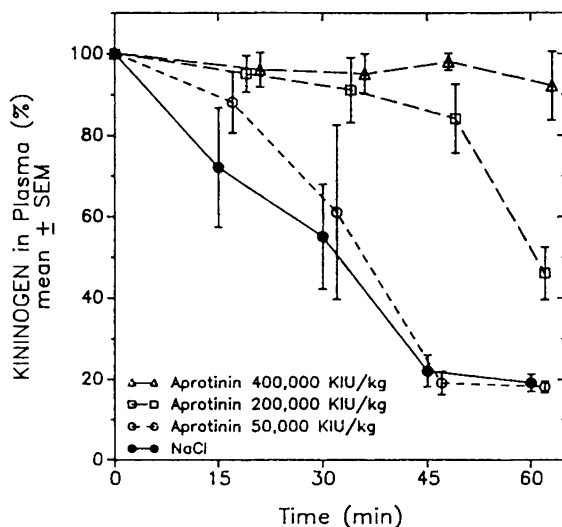


Fig. 3. Plasma kininogen concentrations in animals during activation of the intrinsic coagulation cascade by continuous infusion of dextran sulphate (DS), 2 mg/kg over 1 h. Aprotinin plasma levels ranged from 100 to 150 KIU/ml at a total dose of 50,000 KIU/kg, from 200 to 300 KIU/ml (dose: 200,000 KIU/kg), and from 400 to 500 KIU/ml at a total dose of 400,000 KIU/kg.

Inhibition of plasma kallikrein

When human plasma kallikrein (HPK) was incubated with human kininogen in the *in vitro* system, HPK concentrations greater than 10^{-9} mol/l were associated with substantial kinin release from HMW kininogen. HPK released kinin not only from HMWK but also from LMWK. At HPK concentrations of 10^{-8} mol/l, 40 % of total HMWK and 20 % of total LMWK was cleaved within 180 min. Aprotinin levels greater than 10^{-5} mol/l (400 KIU/ml) effectively blocked the action of HPK on HMWK (Fig.1) and on LMWK (data not shown). The actual concentrations of aprotinin necessary for complete inhibition of kinin release depended clearly on the amount of plasma kallikrein present. Thus, the inhibitory effectiveness of a certain aprotinin concentration *in vivo* would depend on the percentage of plasma prokallikrein activated under the given conditions.

Induction of contact activation in animal experiments by continuous infusion of dextran sulphate (DS) over 60 min led to a transient drop in MAP (-66 ± 14 mmHg) and a decrease in plasma prokallikrein (-77 ± 2 %) and kininogen levels (-81 ± 5 %). Administration of aprotinin delayed the onset of MAP reduction and the consumption of kininogen in a dose-dependent manner (administered dose vs. onset of MAP decrease: Pearson $r^2=0.86$; $n=8$). No MAP reduction at all and only a slight consumption of kininogen (-8 ± 12 %) was observed at plasma aprotinin levels of 400 - 500 KIU/ml in group DS₃ (Fig. 3). Plasma levels of aprotinin in group DS₁ ranged from 100 - 150 KIU/ml and in group DS₂ from 200 - 300 KIU/ml. Platelet count dropped below 200,000 $1/\text{mm}^3$ in 4 out of the 5 animals in group DS₀. In the aprotinin treated animals thrombocytopenia developed in 1 of the 4 animals in group DS₂ and in none of two animals in group DS₃.

DISCUSSION

The primary target enzymes of the basic proteinase inhibitor aprotinin (Trasylol^R) from bovine tissue cells, are serine proteases such as trypsin, plasmin, as well as tissue and plasma kallikrein (Fritz and Wunderer, 1983). In this study aprotinin was assayed for its ability to inhibit the action of tissue kallikrein and plasma kallikrein on their natural substrates, HMW and LMW kininogen, both *in vitro* and *in vivo*. The results demonstrate that effective inhibition of tissue kallikrein and plasma kallikrein may be achieved, *in vitro* and *in vivo* under concentration conditions known to occur clinically. Human tissue kallikrein and human plasma kallikrein have affinities to aprotinin comparable to those of the corresponding enzymes of porcine origin (Fritz and Wunderer, 1983). Our *in vitro* studies using purified human compounds, and the *in vivo* studies using pigs, yielded comparable results. Therefore the inhibitory plasma levels determined may be equally valid in humans. Plasma levels of aprotinin were measured by a recently developed competitive enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay (Mueller-Esterl et al., 1984). This assay has been shown to provide a versatile means to monitor rapidly and precisely aprotinin levels in plasma and body fluids from patients treated with aprotinin (Jochum and Mueller-Esterl, 1985; Clasen et al., 1987).

The activation and release of pancreatic proteases such as trypsin or tissue kallikrein into peritoneal exudates and into the circulation, concomitant with the consumption of endogenous inhibitors and the turnover of kininogen, has been demonstrated in both experimental pancreatitis (Kortmann et al., 1983; Borgstrom and Ohlsson, 1978) as well as clinically in man (Balldin and Ohlsson, 1979). Using continuous tissue kallikrein infusion as a model for kallikrein liberation, e.g. during acute pancreatitis, we studied the inhibition of tissue kallikrein with aprotinin in animal experiments. The dose of kallikrein infused was calculated from the kallikrein

amount present in the porcine pancreas (Frey et al., 1968). The results obtained revealed that even the maximal continuously liberated dose of kallikrein, as can be predicted in vivo, may be sufficiently blocked at aprotinin plasma levels of 4 - 10 KIU/ml (10^{-7} mol/l). This was assessed by kininogen consumption and measurements of arterial pressure. Keeping in mind that trypsin is even more sensitive to aprotinin inhibition, concentrations of 10^{-7} mol/l should also suffice to completely inactivate trypsin released from the pancreas under inflammatory conditions (Fritz, 1985).

Unlike tissue kallikrein and trypsin, plasma kallikrein (HPK) is much less efficiently inhibited by aprotinin (Fritz, 1978). HPK plays a major role in the activation of the coagulation and fibrinolytic cascades. (i) It triggers the endogenous pathway of blood coagulation via F XII activation, (ii) it liberates kinin from kininogen, and (iii) it may stimulate polymorphonuclear granulocytes and thus induce the release of lysosomal enzymes (Mueller-Esterl and Fritz, 1984; Schapira et al., 1983). A pronounced and rapid activation of HPK has been demonstrated in traumatized and septic patients, and during cardiopulmonary bypass (McConn et al., 1983; Aasen, 1985; Heller et al., 1987). Activation of HPK occurs on negatively charged surfaces, e.g. exposed subendothelial structures. Also the cell wall fractions of bacteria may activate HPK (Kalter et al., 1983). Thus, after trauma and sepsis, in a short time period, high amounts of active HPK may be generated from its precursor plasma prokallikrein despite high concentrations of endogenous HPK inhibitors present in plasma.

We used the intravenous infusion of dextran sulphate (DS) as a model for the induction of in vivo contact activation. In this model about 80 % of the plasma prokallikrein is activated within 60 minutes. This activation is paralleled by a transient fall in arterial pressure, a rapid turnover of the kininogens, a fall in platelet count, and a prolonged coagulation time. Aprotinin was able to attenuate this response to DS in a clear dose dependent manner. Marginal inhibition was observed at plasma levels of 100 KIU/ml, weak inhibition with 200 KIU/ml, while plasma levels greater than 400 KIU/ml abolished the effect completely. This was confirmed in the in vitro studies: When physiological concentrations of HMWK were incubated with small amounts of HPK (corresponding to 1 % of the total HPK pool activatable in vivo) kinin release was inhibited at aprotinin concentrations of 40 KIU/ml, whereas when higher amounts of HPK were applied (corresponding to 10-20 % of the total HPK pool), only aprotinin concentrations as 400 KIU/ml properly inhibited the action of HPK on kininogen. These results are in agreement with theoretical considerations based on enzyme kinetics and substrate availability which predicted that only aprotinin concentrations of 200-400 KIU/ml would suffice to effectively inhibit plasma kallikrein (Fritz, 1978; Philipp, 1978).

At exceedingly high aprotinin plasma levels the inhibitory function of aprotinin may be explained in part by alternative mechanisms. At pH 7.4 aprotinin is a highly positive charged molecule and may avidly bind to negatively charged surfaces (Fritz and Wunderer, 1983). In our model, aprotinin may directly bind to DS and thus saturate the negatively charged activating surface. In addition, it is known from ACD blood that aprotinin (at concentrations of 400 KIU/ml) may bind to negatively charged molecules of the platelet membrane surface and thus inhibit platelet aggregation (Harke et al., 1982). This effect of aprotinin, based on ionic interactions may be responsible for the absence of thrombocytopenia in the high dose aprotinin group. However, this non specific effect of aprotinin, in addition to its role as an enzyme inhibitor may be significant in certain clinical situations such as after trauma or during cardiopulmonary bypass.

The question arises as to the feasibility of obtaining these plasma concentrations of aprotinin in clinical situations. Recent studies have been

shown that this is indeed feasible (Clasen et al., 1987). However, due to the short plasma half life time of the inhibitor a continuous infusion is necessary to maintain plasma levels within the desired range (Fritz et al., 1969, Clasen et al., 1987). Very high doses of aprotinin are apparently tolerated well. Coagulatory or microcirculatory disturbances have not been observed after administration of 17.5 million KIU aprotinin within 24 hours in traumatized patients (Clasen et al., 1987). The dosage regimen used in this study resulted in initial peak plasma levels of about 400 KIU/ml which returned to 100-200 KIU/ml during subsequent continuous infusion of 1 million KIU/h over 12 hours. In our study, in two aprotinin-control animals showing peak plasma levels of 800 KIU/ml after a bolus injection and 400 to 500 KIU/ml during subsequent continuous infusion of aprotinin, apart from a slight prolongation of the coagulation time, no physiologic change was noted.

In conclusion, the present study demonstrated that effective inhibition of tissue kallikrein and plasma kallikrein in vivo is achieved at aprotinin plasma levels of 4 - 10 KIU/ml (10^{-7} mol/l) and 400 KIU/ml (10^{-5} mol/l), respectively. In conjunction with the newly developed assays for aprotinin this data may help to improve the efficacy of proteinase inhibitor therapy.

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